



Set a goal and create action plans



# Your reasons for change

Think about the most important reason or reasons why you want to drink less. It can be helpful to note down this reason and to remind yourself of it.

You can write your reason (or reasons) in the space below.

The most important reason for wanting to lower my drinking is:

If you need some ideas for reasons to cut down, visit the page [The benefits of drinking less](#).

If you think you may be alcohol dependent, don't stop drinking until you've sought medical advice. [Get help with alcohol dependency](#).

## Setting a goal

It's helpful to think about what it is exactly that you want to change. Firstly, think about an overall goal. Ask yourself: "What's the main thing I'd like to change about my drinking?"

If you've completed the [alcohol quiz](#) think about the advice you received. Examples of some overall goals related to cutting back your drinking could be:

- Drink less alcohol
- Stop drinking altogether
- Have drink-free days

## Write your overall goal:

### Setting more specific goals

Next, think about different things you could do to help you achieve your overall goal. These are like mini-goals, and you might have a few that all help you towards your overall goal.

#### Here are some examples:

- Record or monitor what I'm drinking
- Try low-alcohol alternatives to my usual drinks
- Lower my drinking at weekends
- Seek support from a specialist group or individual
- Replace alternate alcoholic drinks with soft drinks
- Count my drinks when I'm drinking
- Find something to distract me at those times when I might have an alcoholic drink
- Identify the situations, people or settings that lead me to drink more
- Work out a strategy on how to politely refuse a drink when with friends or family

#### Here are some tips for writing a specific goal:

When you are setting any kind of goal, try to make them SMART - this means:

- **Specific** - adding in more detail will help you see what you need to do
- **Measurable** - using numbers is always helpful
- **Action-focused** - make sure the goal describes a behaviour
- **Realistic** - the goal should be something you can actually do
- **Timed** - know when you want to achieve your goal by

**For example, take the goal of 'I want to lower my drinking at weekends'. The SMART version might be "I want to have just one small glass of wine with my meal on Saturday and Sunday nights over the next 2 weeks".**

## Write your specific goal or goals:

## Making a plan

One way you can increase your chances of successfully quitting smoking is by planning how you are going to make the changes you want.

An 'action plan' is a detailed plan of what exactly you are going to do to achieve your goal and how you are going to do it.

A simple way to do an action plan is to add details under the headings of What, Where and When. We've given examples below so you can see how the goals and action plans fit together. You can do as many action plans as you want for your goal – the important thing is for you to feel confident in what you're doing.

### Examples of plans

**Overall goal:** to drink less alcohol

**Specific goal:** try low-alcohol alternatives to my usual drinks

**Action plan:**

- What: Have a 0% alcohol beer with my evening meal
- Where: at home
- When: Friday night

**Specific goal:** replace alternate alcoholic drinks with soft drinks

**Action plan 2:**

- What: have a lime and soda or lemonade instead of a glass of wine
- Where: at the pub
- When: Saturday evening

**There's no limit on the number of plans you can set relating to your goal.**

**Remember to refer to your overall and specific goals when creating your action plan.**

## Add your action plan

**What:**

*For example, lower my drinking at weekends*

**Where (setting or environment):**

*For example, at home*

**When:**

*For example, on Saturday nights*

**Feel free to make another action plan on the next page.**

## Add your action plan

**What:**

*For example, lower my drinking at weekends*

**Where (setting or environment):**

*For example, at home*

**When:**

*For example, on Saturday nights*

## Keep a reminder of your goal and plan

Putting positive reminders of your goals in place is another helpful way to make sure you stay on track. Here are some examples:

- Use an [alcohol tracker](#) or diary. Keep it on your bedside table so it acts as a reminder at the start and end of each day. You could also keep it in your kitchen so you see it each time you go in.
- Remove all alcoholic drinks from where you usually keep them. Replace these with alcohol-free options.
- Put up several reminders in places you regularly use: in your car or at your workplace and home.